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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 001211

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRIME MINISTER ON MARGINS OF JUNE 9 - 10
ICG

REF: NAIROBI 1112

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 9 meeting with acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Africa Wyckoff on the margins of the Rome International Contact Group (ICG), TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke attempted to portray progress on the ground in Somalia, disputed suggestions that his government was getting too cozy with the warlords, complained about al-Jazeera and BBC Somalia Service coverage, and requested USG help in procuring communications equipment and providing training for TFG troops. He reported no progress in negotiations with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a since his last meeting one week earlier with ADAS Wyckoff in Nairobi. End summary.

Medical Aid in Mogadishu

¶2. (C) In a June 9 meeting with acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Wyckoff on the margins of the Rome International Contact Group on Somalia (ICG), TFG Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke portrayed recent fighting in the central regions as having inflicted heavy casualties on al-Shabaab and other insurgents, who he said had no way to evacuate their wounded.

¶3. (C) TFG troops had also been wounded in the fighting, Sharmarke said. Thirty-five had been evacuated to Kenya, where the GOK had agreed to make available a military hospital for their treatment. The TFG was active in efforts to treat the civilian wounded in Mogadishu. Portions of a twenty-two ton shipment of medical supplies recently provided by Italy were, at TFG insistence, being supplied to all hospitals, including those in Mogadishu territories controlled by al-Shabaab. Doctors from a hospital in the insurgent-controlled Dayninle region had recently been summoned to the TFG President's compound, and told that the TFG Ministry of Health would ensure that they received a fair share of the Italian aid. Sharmarke was aware that al-Shabaab fighters would be treated in Dayninle, but seemed confident that TFG evenhandedness would only improve its reputation with Somalis.

ASWJ and TFG Still
Not Cooperating

¶4. (C) Sharmarke told ADAS Wyckoff that the TFG was seeking ways to support Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ). There was no agreement on how the organization could be incorporated into

the TFG. Motioning to the four ministers attending the meeting with him, Sharmarke noted that "we are all members of ASWJ." (Attending the meeting were Minister of Women and Family Affairs Fowziya Mohamed Sheikh, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdishakur Warsame, Minister of Environment Burci Hamza, and Minister of Posts and Telecommunications Abdirizak Osman Jurile.) Sharmarke praised ASWJ for its fierce fighting on June 5 in Wabho, and reported that al-Shabaab there had requested a ceasefire; a sign that it had sustained serious losses he thought. Much work on improving relations with ASWJ in the central regions remained to be done.

¶5. (C) Sharmarke detected as well signs that Hisbul Islam (HI) was increasingly unhappy with al-Shabaab's tactics. He has been told that a HI spokesman had recently denounced al-Shabaab and, according to Sharmarke, people close to HI's Hassan Dahir Aweys had recently been in contact with the TFG.

Claimed Successes on the Battlefield

¶6. (C) In the meantime, the Prime Minister said, the TFG or its allies had recently re-taken the Middle Shabelle capital of Jowhar and the town of Mahaday. Minister of Security Omar Hashi continued to recruit for the TFG in the Hiraaan regional capital of Beletweyne, with an eye to liberating Buloburti on what Sharmarke hoped would be a march to Mogadishu.

¶7. (C) ADAS Wycoff briefly described his efforts, during

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travels in the region, to mobilize support for the TFG from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In addition to the USG's work to strengthen Sheikh Sharif's government, ADAS Wycoff described the Gulf states' willingness to pressure residents in their countries who opposed the TFG. If the TFG had specific information about spoilers resident there, he recommended that they supply it.

Italy More Active on Somalia

¶8. (C) The Prime Minister agreed and, as he had done in recent meetings, said that the TFG was compiling a list of information on specific spoilers. Also, the TFG was examining the activities of hawalas, airlines, and the Somali telecommunications sector, in addition to attempting to develop information on individual TFG opponents.

¶9. (C) In a June 9 meeting, Italian Foreign Minister Frattini appeared "for the first time" engaged in Somali affairs. The GOI was contemplating military training, and had agreed to open an Embassy in Mogadishu. (The GOI representative announced that Italy would re-establish its Embassy at end of the June 10 session of the TFG.)

Strong USG Presence Welcome

¶10. (C) Sharmarke strongly rejected suggestions that Somalis reject too active USG engagement with the TFG. Al-Shabaab's inability to launch a successful frontal attack on the TFG, combined with a belief that the USG was allergic to Somalia following the UNISOM would cause Somalis to welcome an aggressive USG presence, he said.

TFG Needs Financial Transparency

¶11. (C) ADAS Wycoff strongly urged Sharmarke to enlist the services of a major accounting firm like Price Waterhouse or KPMG as soon as possible. Increased transparency would

improve the confidence of the international community in Somalia, he noted. Sharmarke promised to finalize an agreement with an accounting firm "in the next two weeks."

Controversial Warlord
Now in Cabinet

¶12. (C) While acknowledging that the loyalties of warlord Indha Adde, whom Sharmarke had recently nominated to be Minister of State for Defense under current MOD Ghandi, were uncertain, Sharmarke hoped that Indha Adde's presence would cause Ayer militias to defect from Hisbul Islam's Aweys. Indha Adde brought with him an excellent understanding of the insurgents, and "he is a fighter," Sharmarke said. To ensure his loyalty, the TFG had confiscated Indha Adde's technicals. Sharmarke thought that Indha Adde's official alliance with the TFG would make it impossible for the warlord to defect to the other side, noting that the TFG's opponents would "kill" Indha Adde if he again attempted to change sides.

¶13. (C) The other Cabinet members present were clearly unhappy with the Sharmarke's decision to include Indha Adde in the government. In a subsequent conversation, Minister Fowziya Mohamed Sheikh worried that Somalis would see the TFG as like some of its warlord-dominated predecessors. She noted that President Sharif had not yet approved Sharmarke's nomination.

Alleged Media Bias

¶14. (C) The TFG had recently recruited former Reuters correspondent Sahal Abdullah to aid its media strategy. Sharmarke welcomed the possibility of using the VOA transmitter in Djibouti, and spoke of linking it with Radio Mogadishu, in order to provide the TFG with a modicum of cover as it broadcast. A TFG media presence was necessary to counter the negative influence of al-Jazeera and the BBC Somalia Service. All of the Cabinet members joined Sharmarke

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in agreeing that BBC routinely distorted events on the ground and conducted more adversarial interviews with TFG representatives than with its opponents.

¶15. (C) The TFG representatives worried that their government's lack of sway in the telecommunications sector meant that they had little hope of confidential communications. All of the bandwidth in Somalia had been allocated among the commercial firms, leaving the TFG unable to reserve part of the spectrum for its own communications. Lack of communications security had hampered them in fighting in Mogadishu, they said.

¶16. (C) As he had in previous conversations, Sharmarke willingly accepted any aid the USG could offer, from military advisors to capacity-building to aid with communications. In a one-on-one conversation with ADAS Wycoff, Sharmarke again asked that the USG supply his government with APCs. ADAS Wycoff asked that the TFG supply the USG with any information it might have about foreign fighters in Somalia.
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